GRAY SHIVER

Eight-Legged Masters of Necromancy

Habitat: Dungeon, Urban; **Treasure:** Arcana

When a lich is destroyed many careless heroes responsible for felling the vile creature neglect to ensure the entirety of the lich's body is destroyed. They become so focused on handling the lich's spirit jar that the undead's skull, more often than not, ends up forgotten in whatever dungeon the lich was destroyed in. In such cases, a seed of evil may persist within the bones of the lich, along with the power that animated it.

By chance occurrence, a tiny vermin such as a spider may take up residence in the skull of the lich whereupon doing so it is bombarded with the liches final thoughts of domination and destruction as well as the final lingering necromantic magic that still clings to the skull.

These final remnants of the once mighty lich will transform the creature living within its skull into something much more villainous and terrible than a mere spider. The creature is gifted a malignant intellect and powers far beyond even some humanoid spellcasters. The gray shiver often develops a god complex, thinking themselves

much more powerful than they actually are. They will begin to amass minions who they dominate with magic and inevitably formulate schemes which extend well beyond their reach.

GRAY SHIVER HOMES

1d6	The Gray Shiver's Skull Belonged To...
1	A horned tyrant of infernal lineage. Their skull is crowned with two massive horns.
2	A powerful aristocrat who commanded legions of undead with ambition of world domination.
3	A lich of goliath heritage. Their skull is large and adorned in giant runes which have been carved into the bone itself.
4	A crazed diviner whose skull is embedded with countless tiny gems.
5	A ruling monarch, their gilded crown fused to their skull in undeath.
6	A hateful necromancer who maligned all living things. Their skull appears plain save for the rows of emeralds replacing their teeth.

LICH SKULLS

The skull of a lich is potentially a very powerful magic item, coveted by aspiring necromancers and devoted cultists alike. If a gray shiver is killed, some magic may yet linger.

Lich Skull

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

The skull can be used as an Arcane Focus.

While attuned to the skull you have resistance to Necrotic Damage, if you already have resistance to Necrotic Damage you have Immunity.

A creature attuned to the skull also knows the *Fear* spell, and adds it to their

list of prepared spells. The creature may cast *Fear* using the caster's spellcasting ability without expending a spell slot, requiring only the skull as a material component. The skull regains the ability to cast Fear in this way every day at midnight.

Spells you cast using the skull as an Arcane Focus ignore resistance to Necrotic Damage, and when you roll damage for a spell you cast that deals Necrotic Damage you can treat any 1 on a damage die as a 2.

Gray Shiver

Tiny Monstrosity, Neutral Evil

AC 15 (20 inside skull)
Hit Points 90 (20d4 + 0)
Speed 20 ft., Climb 20 ft.

Initiative +8 (18)

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR 2	-4	+1	**DEX** 19	+4	+13	**CON** 14	+2	+7
INT 15	+2	+11	**WIS** 13	+1	+6	**CHA** 21	+5	+10

Skills Arcana +6, Perception +5, Stealth +12
Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned
Resistances Necrotic, Poison
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 30 ft., Truesight 5 ft., Passive Perception 15
Languages Any languages known by the lich whose skull the shiver occupies.
Challenge 9 (XP 5,000; PB +4)

Traits

Bone Hermitage. While the shiver is inside its skull, it has three-quarters cover (+5 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws), and is also unaffected by anything that would sense its emotions or alignment, read its thoughts, or magically detect its location, or observe it remotely.

Magic Resistance. The shiver has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Megalomania. The shiver adds its Charisma bonus to all Saving Throws.

Skull Dependency. If the lich skull the shiver lives in is ever destroyed, the shiver returns to an ordinary spider in 1 hour. The skull has an AC of 15, 30 hit points, and immunity to damage from nonmagical weapons. While the spider is in the skull it is treated as a piece of equipment being worn by the spider.

Spider Climb. The shiver can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Walker. The shiver ignores movement restrictions caused by webs, and the spider knows the location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Actions

Poisoned Bite. Melee Attack Roll: +8, reach 5 ft. Hit: 1 Piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) Poison damage. *Wisdom Saving Throw*: DC 17, a creature bitten by the shiver. *Failure*: The target has the Poisoned condition for the next minute. The shiver has a telepathic link with the Poisoned target while the two creatures are on the same plane of existence. On the shiver's turn, it can use this link to issue commands to the target (no action required), such as "Attack that creature," "Move over there," or "Fetch that object." The creature does its best to obey on its turn. If it completes an order and doesn't receive further direction from the shiver, it acts and moves as it likes, focusing on protecting itself. The shiver can command the creature to take a Reaction, but must use its own Reaction to do so. At the end of the minute, the target must succeed on a Saving Throw against the shiver's poison or continue to be Poisoned for 1 week. *Success*: The creature is not Poisoned.

Spellcasting. The shiver casts one of the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attack):

- At will: *Detect Magic, Mage Hand, Message, Prestidigitation, Magic Missile, Ray of Enfeeblement, Sleep, True Strike*
- 2/day each: *Fireball, Major Image, Scorching Ray*
- 1/day each: *Greater Invisibility, Polymorph*

Reactions

Protective Magic (Recharge 5-6). The shiver casts *Counterspell* or *Shield* in response to the spell's trigger, using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting.

Created by: ***JOSIAH "DUNGEON DAD" AMBROSE***

Art by: ***TAM***

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